various concerns, as reported in the Asian Age on 6th January, 1999 under the caption US to India: List nuclear missiles needs;

(b) if so, whether such act constitutes breach of international law which prohibits intervention in the internal affairs of an independent sovereign nation; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to ensure that such irresponsible act is not repeated any more?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) the Asian Age of 6th January, 1999 carried a report containing excerpts from an interview by the US Ambassador in which the Ambassador *inter alia* reportedly described GOI' policy statements on no-first-use of nuclear weapons and not indulging in any arms race as "encouraging but...general". He further expressed the hope that Government would be "more clear in defining what this notion is, as it was vital to de-escalating tensions and not getting caught in an unintended arms race in the region". This does not amount to "questioning nuclear preparedness to meet potent threats".

(c) government have made clear that its minimum nuclear deterrent policy is not a fixity and will be determined in the light of our security perceptions. Government has also stated that it will not accept any limitations on its defence capabilities for responding to possible future threats to national security.

China's protest against statement regarding Taiwan

372. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the statement made by the union Urban Affairs Minister wherein he has described Taiwan as an independent country;

(b) whether China has protested against such a description of Taiwan; and

(c) if so; what is Government reaction thereon and whether there has been a change in Government policy with regard to Taiwan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Government's attention has been drawn to the press reports in this regard.

(b) and (c) In response to a Chinese demarche, we have reiterated Government's consistent policy on relations with Taiwan. Government of India do not maintain any official or diplomatic relations with the "Republic of China" Under this policy framework, Government promotes non-official economic, trade and cultural links with Taiwan to enhance trade, tourism and investment.

Indo-American Dialogue

373. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI JANARDHASNA POOJARY:

Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the eighth round of Indo-American dialogue on issues relating to security, disarmament and non-proliferation took place in New Delhi in the last week of January, 1999;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the final outcome of the dialogue;

(c) whether at the end of the dialogue a joint statement was issued wherein both sides expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the talks; and

(d) if so, the basic of such satisfaction and whether any concrete agreement was arrived on any specific issue?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) India and the US have been engaged in a high-level intensive dialogue since June 1998. The latest round of Indo-US talks was recently held in New Delhi from January 29—31, 1999.

(b) The Indian side was led by Shri Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister. The US delegation was let by US Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott. The main interlocutors have been designated to conduct the dialogue as representatives of the Prime Minister of India and the president of USA respectively. A compact team of officials from both sides assisted the two leaders.

The talks were conducted over three days in plenary sessions as well as smaller groups of designated officials. In addition, Mr. Strobe Talbott also called on the PM, RM and leaders of some political parties.

The talks are being conducted on the basis of comprehensive proposals that India put forward on disarmament and non-proliferation matters, namely a unilateral moratorium on explosive nuclear tests, willingness to discuss converting it into a de jure obligation, decision to enter into contructive negotiations on the FMCT and reaffirming our policies on stringent control on export of sensitive technologies.

After several rounds the talks had narrowed and are now focussed on four issue related to security, disarmament and non-proliferation namely CTBT, FMCT, Export Controls and Defence Posture.

Both delegations have expressed satisfaction over the outcome of the talks. As in earlier meetings, the security perspectives of the two sides were further clarified with a view to harmonising respective perspectives.

It has been decided that Indian-US expert level teams will meet in March for follow-up talks on export controls. The leaders of the delegations will also remain in contact. While these talks continue, both sides will endeavour to create a positive atmosphere for advancing their relations.

(c) Yes Sir. A joint statments was issued on January 31, 1999 at the conclusion of this round, wherein both sides expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the talks. The text of the Statement is attached.

(d) Both sides recognised that the purpose of the talks is to lay the foundation of a broad-based relationshiup between India and the United States. In his correspondence with the Prime Minister, the President of the United States of America has expressed his desire for a board-based relationship that befits the largest democracies of the world. We have reciprocated these sentiments. Such a broad-based relationship will include cooperation in a range of areas such as trade and investment, science and technology, defence, academics and culture. We feel that progress in the ongoing dialogue would provide further momentum to bilateral relations, which is desired by both countries.

Visit to Pakistan

374. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the newspaper reports about P.M.'s proposed visit to Pakistan by bus are correct;

(b) if so, whether any date has been fixed; and

(c) what is the reponse from Pakistan to this gesture by India?